

Message Text

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15

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT EI

SUBJ: DUBLIN DISCOURAGED BY NORTHERN ELECTION RESULTS

1. ONE GOI MINISTER HAS COMMENTED PRIVATELY THAT HE IS VERY DISCOURAGED BY RESULTS OF NI GENERAL ELECTIONS. HE NOTED THAT LOYALIST VOTE ACTUALLY INCREASED TO ABOUT 58 PERCENT (UP FROM 51 PERCENT IN LAST ELECTION). PROTESTANT COMMUNITY THEREFORE SEEMS VERY UNLIKELY TO ELECT ANY LARGE NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES WILLING TO COMPROMISE WITH CATHOLICS AT FORTHCOMING CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION. THIS MINISTER'S REACTION -- AT AN UNGUARDED MOMENT SHORTLY AFTER ELECTIONS -- WAS TO COMMENT THAT GOI MIGHT BE BETTER OFF SIMPLY TO "FORGET ABOUT THE NORTH" FOR A FEW YEARS AND CONCENTRATE INSTEAD ON SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THE COMMENT WAS OFF-THE-RECORD, HOWEVER, AND THE MINISTER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR NI AFFAIRS. WE PLAN TRANSMIT AUTHORITATIVE GOI REACTION WHEN WE GET BRIEFING.

2. DUBLIN PRESS HAS MADE FOLLOWING BASIC POINTS:

(A) DESPITE LOYALIST LOSS OF ONE SEAT (DOWN TO 10 OUT OF 12), THE INCREASES IN POPULAR VOTE OBVIOUSLY SUGGESTS ABSENCE OF ANY CLIMATE FOR COMPROMISE.

(B) THERE IS NO INDICATION OF ANY SIGNIFICANT BREAK IN LOYALIST
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MONOLITH. FAULKNER UNIONISTS PERFORMED DISMALLY; ALLIANCE PARTY

WAS NOT MUCH BETTER; AND PROTESTANT "WORKERS" GOT OFF TO A NON-START.

(C) ON CATHOLIC SIDE, SDLP DID WELL IN CONSTITUENCIES WHERE THEY CONTESTED ELECTIONS. IN ONE SENSE, THIS IS ENCOURAGING, AS SDLP REMAINS GENERALLY MODERATE. AT SAME TIME, THIS RESULT SHOWS THWQ SECTARIAN DIVISIONS HAVE SHARPENED, FOR SDLP DRAWS ALMOST ALL SUPPORT FROM ONE COMMUNITY (DESPITE SOME APPARENT PROTESTANT VOTES IN THIS ELECTION).

(D) EXTREME-CATHOLIC REPUBLICAN CLUBS SCORED BADLY, SHOWING SMALL SUPPORT FOR IRA, BUT STILL SPLIT CATHOLIC VOTE ENOUGH TO DEFEAT ONE OR TWO SDLP CANDIDATES.

(E) POWELL'S VOTE PERFORMANCE WAS NOT AS IMPRESSIVE AS EXPECTED, BUT HE IS STILL INTENSELY DANGEROUS IN HIS POSITION AS ONE OF LEADING "ULSTER LOYALISTS." HE BETTER THAN ANYONE CAN GIVE INTELLECTUAL VENEER TO RAW TRIBALISM.

(F) MOST WRITERS HOPE THAT MERLYN REES WILL BE REPLACED AS NI SECRETARY.

(G) MANY FEAR LOYALISTS "COUP" AGAINST BRITISH RULE, AND NO ONE SEEMS TO THINK THAT PRIME MINISTER WILSON WILL SHOW MUCH FORTITUDE IN OPPOSING IT.

3. COMMENT: RESULTS DO NOT APPEAR TO MODIFY EXISTING POLICY ANALYSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.
MOORE

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